Spring 2012 Courses

TOPICS IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS – PROTECTION AGAINST WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION, WWS 556D
Frank N. von Hippel

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the only significant security threats to the U.S. and its allies have been from nuclear, biological and chemical weapons. Historically, the US focus has oscillated between protection via nonproliferation and disarmament agreements, and via civil and missile defense. The course assesses the threats, both approaches to protection, and linkages made between policies on WMD and perceptions of "conventional" military threats.

LIFE IN A NUCLEAR-ARMED WORLD – FRESHMAN SEMINAR, FRS 140
Zia Mian

On August 6, 1945, on hearing the news that America’s new atom bomb had destroyed its first target, the Japanese city of Hiroshima, President Harry Truman declared, “This is the greatest thing in history.” Six decades later, in April 2009, President Barack Obama declared that, “As the only nuclear power to have used a nuclear weapon, the United States has a moral responsibility to act...So today, I state clearly and with conviction America’s commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons.” This course will look at what it has meant to live with the bomb in America through the Cold War, the spread of nuclear weapons to other states and the fear of nuclear terrorism, and what the future may hold. Along with the growth of nuclear arsenals, recurring nuclear crises, proliferation, and an ever present threat of nuclear war, the course will look at the impact of nuclear weapons on everyday life. We will explore the implications of the argument made by the American novelist E. L. Doctorow that, “We have had the bomb on our minds since 1945. It was first our weaponry and then our diplomacy, and now it’s our economy. How can we suppose that something so monstrously powerful would not, after years, compose our identity?” This course will try to unpack some of the meanings of the nuclear age, using scholarly and popular writings as well as movies and documentary films about “the bomb.” It will look at the design, development, production, and maintenance of a nuclear arsenal, and the associated economic, political, and environmental costs, as well as the lives of people in communities who lived and worked as part of the nuclear complex. We shall look also at the struggles of the anti-nuclear movement in its efforts to restrain decision makers, end arms races, and to ban the bomb.

POLICY SEMINAR, WWS 402
Harold Feiveson

TOPIC IN POLICY ANALYSIS (HALF-TERM) – ENERGY, ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT, WWS 594P
M.V. Ramana

An interdisciplinary introduction to debates about energy, environment, and development. Some of the questions to be addressed are: Should one posit quantitative or qualitative limits to economic growth? What kinds of social change might be desirable or necessary to achieve a sustainable future? What role does energy play in improving the well-being of the poor and how does one ensure that this function is "optimized”? What are the roles for technology and consumption reduction in climate mitigation? How can we reduce pollution, environmental degradation, and human hardship due to the use of bio-fuels in cooking?